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ABSTRACT

This guide reports the opinions of a group of five computer coordinators from educational software and preview agencies about software products that seem promising, but have not necessarily been tested. The 22 software packages reviewed include applications for math, language arts, science, social studies, health, graphics, authoring, and database management. In addition to a brief description of the software package, each entry includes information on: (1) the publisher; (2) the optimal grade level; (3) topics addressed; (4) hardware requirements; and (5) price. A list of software producer addresses and telephone numbers is also provided. (GL)

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NEW AND PROMISING: Software Worth A Look

A MicroSIFT Survey of Educational Software Preview Center Coordinators

Volume I, No. 4

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November 1989

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This report might be thought of as a tip sheet for educational software. It consists of the opinions of a group of five computer coordinators from educational software preview centers and evaluation agencies. Since these agencies have access to the newest software (often before it is actually published) and since they communicate with a great number of teachers, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory considers their opinions about the new software very valuable. Keep in mind, these are products which seem promising—they have not necessarily been thoroughly tested. As with any recommendations, this list should be viewed as a list of products worth investigating further on your own.

This is the fourth quarter in which a *New and Promising* report has been compiled. It is worth mentioning that many products from the last two quarterly lists have still not made it to the market. In this issue, we have tried very hard to distinguish between actual software which is only complete enough for a salesperson to demonstrate.

Algebra Series I-1, I-2, II-1, II-2
Publisher: IBM **Price:** $297.20
Grades: 7-12
Topics: Math, Algebra
Hardware: IBM PC
Description: Students can practice the basic ideas, skills, and concepts of first -and second -year algebra. Series consists of four parts, sold separately, and is equivalent to a second-year algebra course. Lab packs are available.

Alphabetizing
Publisher: EBSCO **Price:** $49.95
Grades: Elementary
Topics: Language Arts, Alphabetizing, Spelling, Special Education, ESL
Hardware: Apple II family
Description: A self-paced program to teach students alphabetizing skills by letter or word. Letters and words are randomly generated. Tests and a built-in management feature allow teachers to monitor student progress. Lab packs are available.

Animal Trackers
Publisher: Sunburst **Price:** $65.00
Grades: 4-10
Topics: Science, Simulation, Biology, Life Sciences
Hardware: Apple IIe c GS 64K
Description: Students investigate different animal habitats and try to identify the animals from their observations and an on-line "field guide." Students can record observations in a computerized "notebook." Three levels of difficulty. Lab packs are available.

Animal Watch: Whale
Publisher: William K. Bradford **Price:** $75.00
Grades: 1-3
Topics: Science, Life Sciences, Biology, Language Arts, Writing
Hardware: Apple II e (enhanced) c c+ GS, 128K
Description: Students engage in a "whale watch," observing the habits and play activities of the humpback. This program is a part of the Explore-a-Science series promoting reading and writing activities in content areas. Includes a program disk, copyable student disk, five science guidebooks, and a teacher's manual. Lab packs and site licensing is available.

Animated Algebra
Publisher: Tom Snyder **Price:** $59.95
Grades: 7-12
Topics: Algebra, Math
Hardware: Macintosh +, SE, II, 1MB RAM, hard disk is recommended.

Description: Students can evaluate and manipulate mathematical expressions through the animation of algebraic equations and calculations. Includes teacher's guide and lesson plans. Lab packs are available.

Color Me: The Computerized Coloring Kit
Publisher: Mindscape **Price:** $44.95
Grades: 0-5
Topics: Special Ed., Graphics, Art, Readiness, Language Arts
Hardware: Apple + c e GS 128K, IBM PC/PC jr, Tandy 1000 128K. Mouse, joystick, or Koala Pad required. Printer (optional).
Description: Students develop their potential for creative self-expression through drawing, coloring, and composing pictures. Kit includes a program disk, picture disk, box of crayons, a coloring book binder, and adhesive-backed paper for stickers. Lab packs are available.

Dinosaur Days
Publisher: Pelican Software **Price:** $39.95
Grades: 2-8
Topics: Database, Science, Life Sciences, Dinosaurs, Language Arts, Writing
Hardware: Apple II family 64K, IBM PC/PC jr. 128K
Description: Graphic database and writing program lets students travel back in time to the world of dinosaurs. Students can create their own dinosaurs and write stories about them. Includes an illustrated workbook. Lab packs are available.

Dinosaur Days Plus
Publisher: Pelican Software **Price:** $49.95
Grades: 2-8
Topics: Database, Science, Life Sciences, Dinosaurs, Language Arts, Writing
Hardware: Apple II family, requires ECHO II or Cricket.
Description: A talking, graphics database and writing program that allows students to write stories about the dinosaurs they create. Lab packs are avai'able.

Diversi-Tune
Publisher: Diversified Software Research **Price:** $75.00
Grades: 5-14
Topics: Music, Fine Arts
Hardware: Apple IIGS, MIDI Interface optional
Description: This music program disk contains ten American folk and patriotic tunes. Students can follow along by watching the bouncing ball on the screen.

Exam in a Can Math Skills Series
Publisher: IPS **Price:** Basic Math Skills, $79.95
Algebra I Skills $89.95
Algebra II Skills $89.95
Geometry Skills $89.95
Grades: 14
Topics: Tool, Algebra, Math, Geometry, Test Generator, Utility
Hardware: Apple IIe c GS, IBM PC/PS2, Tandy 1000, graphics capable printer.
Description: This algorithm-driven problem generator is available for Basic Math, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry Skills. Problems can be generated in free-response or multiple-choice formats and answers are printed.

Excelsior GRAD
Publisher: Excelsior **Price:** $185.00
Grades: 14
Topics: Tool, Utility, Database, Gradebook
Hardware: IBM PC/AT 256K/Tandy 256K, requires MS-DOS 2.0 or higher
Description: A student data management system for teachers combining database management with spreadsheet-like grading. Distributed by IBM and is also available in a network version.

HyperStudio: The HyperMedia Authoring Systems
Publisher: Roger Wagner **Price:** $149.95
Grades: 7-16
Topics: Tool, Authoring
Hardware: Apple IIGS, 1.25M
Description: An authoring system allowing the user to create an interactive environment similar to HyperCard on the Macintosh incorporating graphics, sound, and text. Features include stacks, buttons, links, and other HyperCard -like features. A site license is available.

In the Holy Land
Publisher: Optical Data **Price:** $395.00
Grades: 9-16
Topics: ESL, Social Studies, History, Videodisc
Hardware: Macintosh lMB with 20 MB hard drive, HyperCard, Pioneer 4200 videodisc player, CAV format
Description: Covers the ongoing conflicts between the Israelis and Palestinians from 1890 to the present. Includes historical news footage, text of original documents, maps, charts, and glossary cards. In-service training and site licensing is available.

International Inspirer
Publisher: Tom Snyder Productions **Price:** $119.95
Grades: 5-12
Topics: Social Studies, Simulation, Geography, Maps, Problem Solving
Hardware: Apple family 64K, MS-DOS 256K
Description: A program designed to promote cooperative learning as students search worldwide for oil producers, energy consumers, agricultural countries, and urbanized populations. One computer manages the game for the class while students, working in small or whole groups, engage in strategically planning their routes across the world. Includes twenty-four student reference books containing world maps, charts, and geographical information. Lab packs are available.

Learn About Animals
Publisher: Sunburst **Price:** $65.00
Grades: 0-2
Topics: Science, Life Sciences, Biology
Hardware: Apple IIe c GS 128K, Muppet Learning Keys and a printer are optional, mouse is recommended.
Description: An animated program enabling students to explore the habitats, eating habits, and movements of a variety of familiar animals. Lab packs are available.

Little Shopper's Kit
Publisher: Tom Snyder **Price:** $109.95
Grades: 0-4
Topics: Math, Simulation, Arithmetic, Money, Applied Math, Problem Solving
Hardware: Apple II family, 64K
Description: Program helps organize shopper's activities by assigning jobs and designating duties. Once the store is in operation, the computer serves as a smart cash register. Kit includes groceries, cash box, play money, reproducible store signs, a classroom idea book, and a teacher's guide.

Mathosaurus Series
Publisher: Micrograms **Price:** $24.95
Grades: 0-12
Topics: Arithmetic, Dinosaurs, Math, Numeration
Hardware: Apple II e c GS, 64K
Description: Lively, animated dinosaurs help students gain an understanding of beginning number concepts and basic computations. Lab packs are available.

Perception, Inc. (Kit)
Publisher: Illinois Renewal Institute **Price:** $185.00
Grades: 0-3
Topics: Readiness, Language Arts, Problem Solving
Hardware: Apple II + c e GS
Description: By moving a robotic helper through the rooms of an imaginary production plant, students choose various activities designed to facilitate cooperative learning and to develop higher-order thinking skills. Includes a teacher management system, teacher's guide, ten copies of program disk, a binder with disk holders, and thirty student workbooks.

Personal Science Laboratory
Publisher: IBM **Price:** $476.00
Grades: 0-12
Topics: Tool, Science, Simulation, Chemistry,Physical Science
Hardware: IBM PC/XT/AT/PS2, DOS 3.0 or higher
Description: A microcomputer-based lab which includes a base unit, temperature, light and pH modules , temperature probes, all necessary cables, and user's guide with a program support diskette.

Redlights, Greenlights, (New Kid in Town)
Publisher: Interactive Image **Price:** $249.00
Grades: 3-8
Topics: Simulation, Life Skills, Psychology, Social Studies, Health, Problem Solving
Hardware: Apple II GS
Description: A social problem-solving package to help students develop skills which will enable them to function more successfully within the family, school, and community. The computer simulation entitled, *New Kid in Town* (intended for grades 4-6), teaches a six-step decision-making model for handling personal and interpersonal problems. Lab packs and network versions are available.

Smart Choices
Publisher: Tom Snyder **Price:** $119.95
Grades: 5-12
Topics: Simulation, Life Skills, Social Studies, Psychology, Health, Problem Solving
Hardware: Apple II family 64K, IBM PC 256K
Description: Through observing and practicing positive decision-making strategies in a nonthreatening environment, students can learn to take responsibility for their behavior by developing the necessary skills to cope with peer pressure, sex, drugs , and other pertinent real-life issues. Package includes a teacher and parent guide, detailed lesson plans, thirty student reference books, and reproducible worksheets.

Time Patterns Toolkit U.S. History
Publisher: Great Lakes Software **Price:** $99.95
Grades: 5-12
Topics: Social Studies, History
Hardware: Apple II GS, 512K
Description: A menu-driven electronic timeline covering U.S. history from 1790 to the present. Pull-down menus enable students to collect information, explore questions, and look for causal relationships about the events and trends that shaped the growth of this country. A graphing feature visually highlights these milestones in U.S. history. Includes a teacher's guide, lesson plans, and a vinyl binder. A lab pack is available. Distribution is handled by Tom Snyder Productions.

PRODUCER CONTACT INFORMATION

Diversified Software Research, Inc
34880 Bunker Hill Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331
1-800-835-2246 x127

EBSCO Curriculum Materials
P.O. Box 11521
Birmingham, AL 35201
1-800/633-8623
in Alabama: 991-1208

Excelsior Software
P.O. Box 2760
Bryan, TX 77805
409/774-4729

IBM. Inc.
P.O. Box 2150
Atlanta, GA 30055
1-800/327-5711

Illinois Renewal Institute(IRI)
200 East Wood Street, Suite 250
Palatine, IL 60067
1-800/922-4474

Interactive Image
36 Beechmont Crescent
Gloucester, Ontario
Canada K1B4A8
613/830-0380

IPS Publishing
31316 Via Colinas, Suite 110
Westlake Village, CA 91362
818/706-1646

Micrograms
1404 N. Main St.
Rockford, IL 61103
815/965-2464
1-800-338-4726

Mindscape, Inc.
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, IL 60062
312/480-7667
1-800999-2242

Optical Data Corporation
30 Technology Drive
Box 4919
Warren, NJ 07060
201/668-0022
1-800/524-2481

Pelican Software
LLSP
21000 Nordhoff St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
1-800/247-4641

Roger Wagner Publishing, Inc.
1050 Pioneer Way, Suite "P"
El Cajon, CA 92020
619/442-0522
1-800/421-6526

Sunburst Communication
39 Washington Ave.
Pleasantville, NY 10570-2898
1-800/431-1934

Tom Snyder Productions, Inc.
90 Sherman Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
1-800-342-0236
617/876-4433

William K. Bradford Publishing, Co.
P.O. Box 1355
Concord, MA 01742
617/862-2570
1-800/421-2009

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- Developing and disseminating effective educational products and procedures
- Conducting research on educational needs and problems
- Providing technical assistance in educational problem solving
- Evaluating effectiveness of educational programs and projects
- Providing training in educational planning, management, evaluation and instruction
- Serving as an information resource on effective educational programs and processes including networking among educational agencies, institutions and individuals in the region

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